Frenchman and Frenchwoman. It is difficult for Britons to realise what Verdun means to France.

The world can show no battlefield to correspond to it. On those heights Gaul and Teuton had, from the blizzards of February to the snows of the following December, been fighting out a racial feud which had existed for thousands of years. The concentrated fury of ages raged and tore, shattered and killed for ten months in one intensive struggle which has no parallel in the history of human savagery. The very road that carried the reinforcements, the guns and the shells that redeemed Verdun, is to this hour for Frenchmen the Via Sacra of their country.

The General who had taken a leading and successful part in organising and directing its defence had a place of his own in the affection and admiration of his countrymen. What magnetised his name with a new thrill of hope was a recent episode in the defence of Verdun which established his reputation, not merely as a tenacious defensive, but as a skilful offensive General. To him was

His recapture attributed the skilful plan which by a

ofDouaumont dramatic stroke recaptured the fort of Douaumont. The fall of Douaumont to the Germans in February had rankled in the French mind. The Germans had driven the French out of a fortress which was in itself an engineering feat of which they were proud, and in whose

strength they reposed the most implicit trust. The man who re-captured Douaumont was therefore a hero. It was a *coup-de-main* but it was also the result of plans minutely worked out and precisely executed. He had hardly been three days in the saddle as Commander-in-Chief when there was launched another equally well-planned attack on the Verdun Front, securing